

## CHAPTER 10

### SECTION 6                      **DISASTER RECOVERY AWARENESS AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

#### 10.6.1 PURPOSE

This section provides APHIS managers, supervisors, and employees with basic, vital information to help formulate proper guidance on emergency preparedness for natural and manmade disasters.

The Administrator and the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official are responsible for implementation of this guidance, as needed.

#### 10.6.2 BACKGROUND

In 1989, the United States experienced two major natural disasters, (Hurricane Hugo and the San Francisco Earthquake). These disasters had a profound effect and impact on APHIS programs, employees and their families in the immediate area. APHIS had no procedures or guidance in place to help APHIS employees deal with the needs, issues, questions, and logistics that arise in these situations to keep programs operational and assist employees with their personal lives.

#### 10.6.3 GENERAL

Natural and man-made disasters may consist of a tornado, flood, fire, earthquake, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, severe winter storm, and nuclear powerplant accident. In the case of hurricanes and winter storms, employees may be able to receive warnings and advisories from the National Weather Service, or other agencies, which will provide time to prepare for its effects. In many instances, there may be little or no warning.

##### A.     Fire

In general, fires claim 6,000 lives a year and cause more than 100,000 injuries. Workplace fires and home fires are included in these totals. The risk of fires occurring in the home and the workplace (including vehicles) can be reduced. Consult Chapter 10, Section 1 of this manual for more general guidance.

##### B.     Floods

Over 362 fatalities in one year were directly weather related, to include floods. Several APHIS offices and their employees were adversely effected by the flooding of the Mississippi River and a large number of its tributaries in 1993. Some offices were forced to relocate to temporary offices, and some employees also were in need of temporary quarters.

With the exception of flash floods in some areas, floods can be reasonably forecast in advance, to allow for preparation.

##### C.     Earthquakes

Scientists cannot precisely predict when or where earthquakes will occur. Seventy million people in 39 States are at high risk. Earthquakes occur most often in States west of the Rocky Mountains, but violent earthquakes also have occurred in the eastern United States. All States are at some risk from this hazard.

APHIS employees in earthquake prone areas began development of procedures and policy regarding emergency preparedness, following a severe earthquake in the San Francisco-Oakland, California, area in 1989.

The greatest effects of earthquakes are not always obvious. APHIS employees can expect to have many services, such as water, sewage, garbage and refuse pick-up, gasoline and other fuel supplies, transportation, and groceries impaired for a period of time following earthquakes. Public safety, fire, and medical services also can be severely impaired.

The greatest dangers encountered are from collapsing buildings and fires.

D. Other

Many other incidents may require emergency planning, such as volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, rioting, pollution from environmental disasters (nuclear power plant accidents, oil spills, tank car accidents) etc.

#### 10.6.4 LOCAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS FOR PREPAREDNESS

- A. To aid the Agency in preparing for emergencies, supervisors should require employees to have first aid training every three years, as directed in Chapter 5, Section 4 of this manual.
- B. Disaster plans should be reviewed by employees annually and be included as a part of the orientation for new employees. Occupant Emergency Plans (OEP) for the office should also be reviewed at this time, and disaster planning can be incorporated into the OEP (see Chapter 10, Section 4).
- C. Designated volunteers who wish to prepare plans should receive disaster training. The American Red Cross is in the forefront of these education efforts, and should be contacted for information on courses.

#### 10.6.5 LOCAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEES/ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES

- A. Establish a volunteer committee of employees designated to make contact with the American Red Cross, fire department, Civil Defense, National Guard, port authorities, Customs, etc. These employees, and duties should be reflected in the OEP.
- B. Identify employees who possess Citizen's Band radios, cellular phones, or are amateur radio operators. Citizens who are amateur radio operators, if there are no employees that possess these setups, may volunteer to assist if contacted.
- C. Establish an Emergency Communications Center. Normally, this will be the work unit's office. The purpose of establishing a center is to provide employees and management

with a central location to contact if necessary. A secondary location (another APHIS office, or a home) is always a good idea.

- D. Appoint an Emergency Coordinator, who will serve to advise employees of warnings received, and act to reestablish communications and operations as quickly as possible following an event.
- E. Establish a chain of command, or phone contact tree, for communication. This can be incorporated in the OEP. Management at all levels should be kept informed of needs for the work unit to resume operations, as well as the employees' personal needs. Following Hurricane Andrew in 1992, several APHIS employees were in need of housing, and other assistance. Several could not be reached or located, nor could they in turn notify their offices of their circumstances.

It is important that all employees be accounted for and their situation known.

- F. Appoint a successor, or back up person, who can carry out the function if the coordinator, or other key person (such as a First Aid provider) is unavailable during the disaster.

#### 10.6.6 GENERAL PREPAREDNESS PROCEDURES

- A. Each office should maintain a listing of every employee's home telephone number, address, and emergency contacts. This should be kept in a reasonably secure, accessible area.
- B. Each office should maintain a complete list of items and vital records (i.e., personnel records, credit cards, vehicle keys) that require securing and/or alternate storage.
- C. All vehicles should be fully fueled upon first learning of possible peril. There will be increased demand for fuel as the danger approaches (such as a hurricane).
- D. Maintain an emergency supply list and location of items which will be necessary to continue operations if the office is forced to relocate (such as typewriters, phytosanitary certificates, laptop computers, etc.). Replenish items used as necessary.
- E. Supervisors should consult with management for direction, in circumstances where the public is directed to evacuate a given area.
- F. Employees who are on medications should ensure that they have enough on hand for several days.

#### 10.6.7 GENERIC OR STANDARD EQUIPMENT FOR THE OFFICE

- A. Portable radio & batteries (include spare batteries)
- B. Water
- C. Flashlights & batteries (include spare batteries)

- D. Pens and paper
- E. First Aid equipment
- F. Fuel
- G. Matches

Many of these items are used daily at work. Items which are not Government purchased can be contributed by employees, who no longer need or use them (such as portable radios, or bottles for water).

It is not necessary to purchase bottled water for these uses, ordinary tap water may be collected before anticipated need (or before the storm hits, for example) and stored in clean containers with caps. However, a small amount of sodium hypochlorite bleach should be on hand to treat water in the event of water service disruption, and to disinfect containers.

Water is one of the most basic of human essentials in these situations; it is also the most often overlooked item. A rule of thumb for usage is one gallon per person, per day, for a minimum of three days.

#### 10.6.8 GENERIC OR STANDARD EQUIPMENT FOR THE HOME

Employees who live in areas where either hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, or severe winter storms (or combinations, as is often the case) may occur, should have available the following, sufficient to last for a three day period:

- A. Water
- B. Food
- C. First Aid supplies
- D. Radio and batteries
- E. Personal hygiene items
- F. Important documents (credit cards, wills, insurance policies)
- G. Blankets
- H. Insect repellent
- I. Fuel
- J. Flashlights
- K. Candles/matches

- L. Clothing
- M. Alternate heat source

Employees with children at home also should consider items which can be of use in keeping them (and yourself) entertained, such as simple games, activities, toys, and books.

#### 10.6.9 GENERIC OR STANDARD EQUIPMENT FOR THE VEHICLE

Employees may wish to consider keeping in their Government vehicle as well as their personal vehicle, the following items, sufficient to last at least one day, if there is a risk of being caught in winter storms, or if working in a remote area:

- A. Water
- B. Food (military meals-ready to eat are excellent choices)
- C. First Aid kit
- D. Radio/cellular phone
- E. Gasoline container
- F. Flares
- G. Blanket

Wildlife Services personnel working in remote areas may wish to ensure that a good knife, sharpening tool or stone, matches, extra cartridges, and a tube tent are available.

Outdoor sports shops and suppliers offer a myriad of items, which employees may wish to purchase as personal property, which can be used at home, and in the vehicle or office. Among the most useful are dehydrated foods, water purification tablets, temporary shelters (tube tents), compact blankets and sleeping bags, and self-contained kits with many useful items.

#### 10.6.10 PUBLICATIONS

The following is a list of some publications on specific disasters you can receive by writing to the address or calling the telephone number below:

For all emergencies: Federal Emergency Management Agency  
P.O. Box 70274  
Washington, D.C. 20024  
(202) 646-3484

ATTN: Publications (single copy requests only)

Phone number for publications: (301) 497-1873 (multiple copy requests)

### **FLOOD**

#### **Flood Emergency and Home Repair Handbook (FIA-13)**

Procedures for dealing with flood hazards and damages to home and contents for homeowners, residential contractors, local government officials.

For a detailed flood plain map of your community, contact the:  
FEMA, Flood Map Distribution Center, 6930 (A-F), San Tomas Road, Baltimore, MD  
21227-6227.

### **HURRICANE**

#### **Hurricane Safety Tips for Hurricanes (L-105)**

Leaflet providing information on hurricane preparedness and warnings.

### **TORNADO**

#### **Tornado Protection**

How to select and design safe areas in buildings to resist high winds.

### **WINTER STORM**

#### **Safety Tips for Winter Storms (L-96)**

Provides safety tips to protect potential victims of winter storms.

#### **Can Your Home Pass the Winter Survival Test?**

Checklist to ensure that your home is prepared for winter.

### **EARTHQUAKE**

#### **Earthquake Safety Checklist (FEMA-46)**

Safety tips to prepare for, respond to, and react in the aftermath of an earthquake.

#### **Preparedness in High-Rise Building (FEMA-76)**

Safety tips and precautions for high-rise dwellers to take during and after an earthquake.

#### **Family Earthquake Safety Home Hazard Hunt and Drill (FEMA-113)**

Identify home hazards and practicing what to do if an earthquake occurs.

### **TSUNAMI**

**Pacific Tsunami Warning Center**, Ewa Beach, HI (808) 689-8207.

**Pacific Tsunami Warning Center**, Palmer, AK (907) 745-4212.

### **FIRE**

#### **An Ounce of Fire Protection (FA-76)**

How smoke detectors and automatic sprinklers protect lives at a minimum expense.

#### **Winter Fire Safety Tips for the Home (L-97)**

Safety tips for the home on fireplaces, stoves, furnace heating, and other places where fire may occur.

## **NUCLEAR DISASTER**

### **Planning for Survival (H-20)**

About the effects of nuclear detonation and protective actions that can be taken by the public.

**Source:** Are You Ready? Your guide to disaster preparedness. Federal Emergency Management Agency. Sept. 1991.